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AUTHOR Solkoff, Norman
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ABSTRACT

The major aim of this study was to determine whether black and white children, ages 8-11, would differ in intellectual performance as a function of the race of the examiner. Two additional subgoals were: (1) to see the effect which the race of the examiner would have on the various subtest scores of the WISC; and (2) to find out if test anxiety scores would differ contingent on the race of the examiner. Four black and 4 white female high school graduates received extensive practical training in administering the WISC, and each then tested 14 black and 14 white children. The children all completed a test anxiety questionnaire prior to administration. Results show that, while the black children generally scored lower than whites, the predicted interaction between race of child and race of examiner was not obtained. In all instances, black examiners produced higher scores than whites. Finally, no significant main effects or interactions were found in relation to the anxiety measure. The findings are discussed. (TL)

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Race of Experimenter as a Variable In Research with Children

Norman Solkoff, Ph. D.
State University of New York at Buffalo

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From the beginning of the 20th Century, and up until the present, a large number of studies has been conducted, and many gratuitous opinions expressed, comparing the performance of black and white children on such response defined measures as intelligence, personality, aptitude, and self-concept. Based upon the results of such studies, or sometimes mainly as a function of biases in the area, generalizations were then made concerning differences between the two groups which emphasize either environmental, genetic, or interactional points of view. However, the validity of these generalizations needed to be questionned, especially in view of the general disregard by most investigators of the possible effects of the racial characteristics of an examiner upon the performance of black children.

Although repeated suggestions have been made that well-controlled studies be conducted to determine the effects of an examiner's race on intelligence test performance, only three studies have attempted to deal directly with this problem. Whereas impressionistic reports have served merely to increase the controversy associated with the effects of examiner race upon the performance of Negroes, the experimental findings have lead to the tentative conclusion that, indeed, the racial characteristics of an examiner, when different from that of his S may deleteriously affect performance. However, in view of the methodological inadequacies of the three studies, and errors in the statistical treatment of the data in one of the studies, the desirability of further investigation became apparent. For example, in previous research, only black children served as Ss, or there was only one examiner of each race. In addition, in the one study using a test-retest design, the testing intervals were not equated and the examiners

CG 006 701

consisted of twenty white examiners and one black examiner, who was also the investigator. With the greatly increased sample size of Ss and examiners of both races, and with data to be gathered from two distinct geographical areas it is expected that the present research will provide a more adequate experimental test of the role of an examiner's race in affecting the intellectual performance of both Negro and white children.

The theoretical framework guiding this research suggests that in addition to the anxiety generated by any test situation, black children may encounter additional burdens during an intellectual evaluation. Because of the generalizations of previously learned anxiety to white adults, who are now going to assess them, black children may also respond to the test situation with a considerable number of task irrelevant, self-centered responses such as feelings of inadequacy, helplessness and fears of loss of status and esteem. These responses may now compete with task completion responses, thereby impairing performance, with complex intellectual tasks suffering most.

In the presence of a black examiner, one major source of task irrelevant responses may be removed for the black child, i.e., the white evaluator. It is also possible that a second source of competing responses, namely one's previous unhappy experiences with tests and evaluations may be reduced, because for many black children, this will be the first time they are evaluated by another black person. In this situation, task relevant responses related to achievement should predominate and, therefore, black children tested by blacks should perform better than when evaluated by whites.

White children will also bring into the testing session a series of previously acquired anxiety reactions to tests and evaluations. In the presence of a white examiner, the performance level reached by these children should be determined by the joint effect of achievement oriented responses and competing anxiety responses. When examined by a Negro, additional

competition may be generated by certain racial stereotypes which are incompatible with seeing the Negro in a "high" status role. Thus, as predicted for the black children, an opposite-race examiner for white children may also more deleteriously affect performance than with same race combinations. However, it is also possible that when children are placed in an evaluatory situation with an examiner of a different race, they might adopt an "I'll show you" attitude resulting in increased effort and motivation, which at least on some tasks, could enhance performance. In the absence of relevant research, it is impossible to give greater priority to either of the two sets of predictions. Finally, despite theoretical considerations, the inclusion of white children should also serve as an additional check on the relevance of an examiner's race for intellectual performance.

Specific Aims

Based upon the assumption that performance level ~~as~~ ON a variety of tasks is to a great extent determined by environmental factors and that the racial environment in which a child works may be one such important factor, the major aim of this research was to:

1. Determine whether black and white children would differ in intellectual performance as a function of the race of the examiner.

Two additional subgoals were:

a) To determine whether the race of an examiner would differentially affect the various subtest scores on the WISC, and,

b) To determine whether test anxiety scores would differ, as a function of the examiner's race.

Subjects

The Ss were 224 children, half boys and half girls from Buffalo, New York. Half of the children within each sex were black and half were white. All children were within the age range of 8 to 11, with a means age of 9.75 years. Although precise matching between blacks and whites on indices of social class is impossible, based upon criteria of father's educational and occupational status, most of our children fell within the upper lower to lower middle class range. Data on a similar sample of children constituted in St. Louis (to determine whether race of examiner effects would differ as a function of geographical area) have not yet been analyzed and will, therefore, not be discussed today.

Examiners

So as to reduce the possible biases which could be associated with any one examiner, we used 8 examiners, all women, and four of each race. All were high school graduates, and none had any previous experience with psychological tests. Their training involved receiving a brief history of the WISC, a complete review of the instructions manual, practice in reading the items, and observation of my administrative techniques. In addition, each examiner tested 6 children, half of each race, and scored their protocols, after which they met with me to discuss any scoring problems. Finally, I observed two administrations by each examiner, and provided immediate feedback. In explaining the purpose of the study, the examiners were told that efforts were being made to determine whether lay people could be trained to administer psychological tests. Five spot checks were made on each examiner. During these times, the entire testing session was tape recorded.

Procedure

Each examiner tested 28 children, 14 black and 14 white, with an equal number of boys and girls in each racial group. After obtaining the necessary biographical information, the Sarasen Test Anxiety Scale was administered to be followed by the complete WISC, with only the mazes subtest eliminated. Each examiner was assigned a university office to which each child was delivered by the same female driver. All testing was done individually, with most examiners testing about five children per week.

Results

In the absence of statistically significant differences among examiners within each race, the data were collapsed across examiners within race, resulting in a 2 x 2 x 2 factoral (race of child x sex of child x race of examiner) which was carried out for each of the WISC subtests, the verbal performance and full scale IQs and for the test anxiety questionnaire.

The main effect of the child's race was significant for all of the WISC subtests ($p < .05 < .01$) with the exception of comprehension, arithmetic and coding as well as for the verbal ($p < .01$), performance ($p < .01$) and full scale IQs ($p < .01$). In all cases, the black children scored significantly lower than the whites. There was a significant main effect of the sex of the child on three of the performance subtests: boys obtained higher scores on picture completion ($p < .01$) and object assembly ($p < .05$) and girls were higher on coding ($p < .01$). Race of examiner was a significant effect for the comprehension ($p < .05$) and picture completion ($p < .05$) subtests, and for the verbal ($p < .05$), performance ($p < .01$) and full scale IQs ($p < .01$). In all instances, the black examiners produced higher scores than the whites. There was a significant interaction between the child's race and sex on the digit span

($p < .01$), with the white girls achieving the highest scores and the black girls the lowest. Finally, there was a significant race of child x race of examiner interaction on only the information subtest ($p < .05$), with the white children achieving the highest scores with a black examiner and the black children the lowest scores with a white examiner.

There were no significant main effects or interactions in relation to the enxiety measure.

Implications and Conclusions:

Except on information, the predicted interaction between race of child and race of examiner was not obtained. It is therefore possible that other factors such as the racial attitudes of an examiner, degree of acceptance of the testee, expectations set for the child, or the child's differential experiences with black and white teachers may more importantly affect intellectual performance than will an examiner's racial characteristics alone. In view of the possibility that the Buffalo children and examiners may not represent the population of such individuals, the present study is currently being replicated in St. Louis, a city with a history different from that of Buffalo concerning segregation-integration issues and where there are more black teachers in the school system.

The significant main effect of an examiner's race on two of the subtests and on the verbal, performance and full scale IQs could have been the result of the childrens' perceptions of the black examiners. Because blacks are not heavily represented in the Buffalo school system and are not typically expected to occupy positions of authority, all of the children may have felt more comfortable with the black examiners and may have, therefore, viewed the testing in less evaluative terms. The test anxiety questionnaire may not have been especially sensitive in detecting these positive feelings when it was administered by the black examiners. Perhaps a series

of questions ought to have been administered at the end of each testing session which would have more directly probed a child's feelings and expectations concerning his black examiner.

Finally, with the exception of the comprehension, arithmetic and coding subtests, the black children scored significantly lower on the remaining subtests and on the verbal, performance and full scale IQs. In addition to the considerable overlap in the distributions between these two groups of children, one must consider the possibility that the two groups were not properly matched on the social class variable. Although objective criteria of social class were employed, the black children were nonetheless concentrated in dilapidated ghettos whereas the white children were less often found in as shabby a physical environment. The generality of these racial differences are presently being explored in St. Louis, where it is expected that a better social class match has been obtained.

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Solkoff
EPA - 1971

Significant Effects on WISC
Subtests, Verbal, Performance and Full-Scale IQs and Test Anxiety

Subtest	Significant Effects	Direction of Differences
Information	1. Race of child	W > B
	2. Sex of child x race of examiner	White children with black examiners > all other groups
Comprehension	1. Race of examiner	B > W
Similarities	1. Race of child	W > B
Vocabulary	1. Race of child	W > B
Digit Span	1. Race of child	W > B
	2. Race of child x sex of child	White girls > all other subgroups
Picture Completion	1. Race of child	W > B
	2. Sex of child	B > G
	3. Race of examiner	B > W
Picture Arrangements	1. Race of child	W > B
Block Design	1. Race of child	W > B
Object Assembly	1. Race of child	W > B
	2. Sex of child	B > G
Coding	1. Sex of child	G > B

Subtest	Significant Effects	Direction of Differences
Verbal IQ	1. Race of child	W M=95.10 B M=89.73
	2. Race of examiner	B M=93.91 W M=90.91
Performance IQ	1. Race of child	W M=102.37 B M=93.13
	2. Race of examiner	B M=99.64 W M=95.85
Full-Scale IQ	1. Race of child	W M=98.41 B M=90.39
	2. Race of examiner	B M=96.23 W M=92.56
Test Anxiety	None	